

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3840

INFO AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF CPRS PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL ASYLUM REQUESTS BY PORTUGUESE CITIZENS

REF: STATE 196089

1. BY WAY OF GENERAL COMMENTS, IT MIGHT BE OBSERVED THAT ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF LAST APRIL'S ELECTION, ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF PORTUGAL IS NON-COMMUNIST AND NEARLY ALL LEAD SAFE, TRANQUIL LIVES. RECENT DISORDERS HAVE RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY, BUT THESE ARE STREET EVENTS INVOLVING RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBERS OF VOLUNTARY PARTICIPANTS. THERE IS NO GENERAL SENSE OF FEAR IN THE COMMUNITY NOR ARE SYSTEMATIC ACTS OF VIOLENCE BEING COMMITTED AGAINST PRIVATE PERSONS BY EITHER THE COMMUNISTS OR ANTI-COMMUNISTS. THE ASPECT BOTH IN THE CITIES AND COUNTRY IS ONE OF POLITICAL EXCITEMENT AND SOME ANXIETY BUT NOT OF VIOLENCE. FOREIGNERS AND PORTUGUESE ALIKE ARE FREE TO GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS IN PEACE AS LONG AS THEY DO NOT INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS.

2. AS REPORTED IN OUR A-177 OF JULY 17, PERSONS WHO NEED FEAR ARREST FOR POLITICAL REASONS ARE MOSTLY THOSE WHO WERE PROMINENT IN POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP OF THE SALAZAR OR CAETANO GOVERNMENT OR THOSE IMPLICATED IN PLOTTING AGAINST CURRENT REGIME. IN SHORT, THE CLAIM OF FEARING PERSECUTION SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENT HAS NO BASIS IN FACT.

3. WITH RESPECT TO PARTICULAR CASES, EMBASSY FINDS THAT THE CLAIMS TO REFUGEE STATUS MADE BY ALCIDO GONCALVES, JOSE DE BARROS FIGUEIREDO AND WIFE, AND JOSE TOLEDO-VIEIRA HAVE NO MERIT WHATSOEVER. THESE DO NOT SEEM TO BE PEOPLE OF IMPORTANCE DURING SALAZAR CAETANO DAYS. IN FACT, THE FIGUEREDOS AND TOLEDO-VIEIRA LEFT PORTUGAL WHILE THAT GOVERNMENT WAS STILL IN POWER. GONCALVES WAS REFUSED NIV AT THIS EMBASSY UNDER PROVISIONS SEC. 101(A)(15) OF INA IN APRIL, 1973, ONE YEAR BEFORE REVOLUTION.

4. OFFICIAL POSITION ONCE HELD BY JOSE AUGUSTO GAMA WARRANTS GIVING HIS CASE FURTHER CONSIDERATION. OUR INFORMATION IS, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS SMALL-FRY IN CAETANO GOVERNMENT. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE HE IS MARKED FOR ARREST. COMMISSION HE SPEAKS OF IS PROBABLY THE ORGANIZATION THAT REVIEWED PAST POLITICAL RECORD OF ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND DISMISSED SEVERAL THOUSAND FROM THEIR JOBS, BUT WITHOUT FURTHER REPRISALS. EVIDENCE IS THAT GAMA, TOO, HAS NO WELL FOUNDED FEAR OF PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF POLITICAL OPINION OR MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIAL GROUP IF HE RETURNS TO PORTUGAL.

5. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DISAPPROVAL OF ASYLUM REQUEST IN EACH CASE.
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